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# Newsroom

April 25, 2011

Georgia Southern University

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## Newsroom

Georgia Southern University

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# Georgia Southern University Engineering Students Record Top 15 Finish in International SEA BAJA Competition

APRIL 25, 2011

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Following an intensive four-day engineering competition, students at Georgia Southern University scored a top 15 finish, placing 12<sup>th</sup> among a host of international colleges and universities at the 2011 Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Mini Baja Competition held at Stony Lonesome's OHV Park near Birmingham, Ala.

Georgia Southern's 12<sup>th</sup> place finish is the highest the University has achieved at the Baja competition since it began competing in 2002. The Eagles finished ahead of teams including Georgia Tech, Virginia Tech, Michigan State, University of South Carolina, Auburn University, and the University of Alabama, to name a few.

"We are thrilled to finish in the top 15 especially competing against major engineering programs from around the world," said Brian Vlcek, professor of mechanical engineering, program coordinator, and Mini Baja team faculty advisor. "This is a volunteer project, not a class assignment, and our students spend hundreds of hours engineering, building and testing their vehicle. This engineering competition is a great demonstration of the skills they learn in class at Georgia Southern."

Georgia Southern's Eagle Motorsports, comprised mostly of engineering students from the University's Mechanical Engineering Technology (MET) program, designed, developed and fabricated the 2011 SAE Baja competition vehicle. Powered by a Briggs & Stratton engine, this year's vehicle featured a variety of innovative features including a custom suspension and a handcrafted gearbox. "The gearbox was a big part of our success this year," commented team captain and MET senior Wes Powell. "In past years, teams have used unreliable off-the-shelf gearboxes or chain-and-sprocket arrangements. We selected the optimum gear reduction ratio for all of the events we would face in Birmingham, and then we designed and fabricated our own gearbox on campus."

The 2011 competition kicked off on Friday, April 15 with registration, technical and safety inspections and static events (cost and design presentations). Ignoring more than five inches of rain, six inches of red mud and several tornado scares on Friday, the team easily passed technical inspection, defended their vehicle in both a cost and design presentation and began preparations to compete in the dynamic events on Saturday.

The weekend competition began Saturday with a series of events including: land maneuverability, suspension/traction courses, a hill climb, acceleration and an "M" shaped water maneuverability test. Powell drove the car to a ninth place finish in the maneuverability event. Junior Anthony Rainey was behind the wheel when Georgia Southern finished sixth in suspension and traction. Junior Simon Galloway drove the car to a 19<sup>th</sup> place finish in the water event, while senior Marvin Duggan placed eighth in acceleration.

The premier event of the competition was Sunday's four-hour endurance race. The course was approximately 1.75-miles long and included a wide variety of obstacles and challenges such as deep mud, hills, off-camber turns, tight wooded areas, banked turns, a water obstacle and jumps.

#### It's not over.

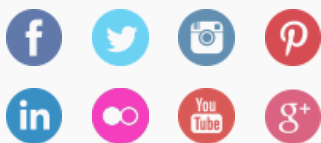
During the competition, there was a discrepancy between the number of laps the team completed versus the number they were credited with. "Georgia Southern actually completed 15 laps during the endurance event, but only received credit for 13," said Vlcek. "We have submitted an appeal, and the records are being reviewed. If the count is corrected, Georgia Southern will actually finish in sixth place rather than 12<sup>th</sup>."

The University will begin offering Bachelor of Science degrees in civil, electrical and mechanical engineering this fall. For more information on Georgia Southern's Eagle Motorsports Team or to donate to future projects, visit: <http://eaglemotorsports.org>.



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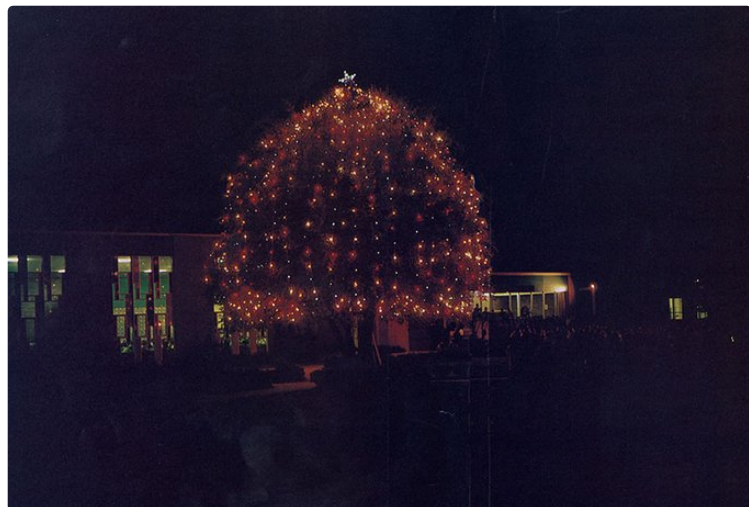
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"O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree..." 🎄 🎵 #TBT to circa 1964, when a tree in front of the Williams Center was decorated for the holidays.



13h

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